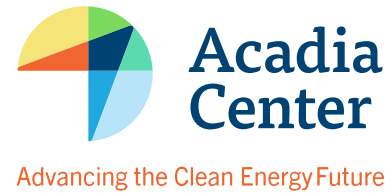


Testimony of Amy McLean

Connecticut Director and Senior Policy Advocate

Public Hearing, March 11, 2022



Before the Environment and Transportation Committees

Honorable Environment Committee Chairpersons Cohen, Gresko, Vice Chairpersons Slap and Palm, Ranking Members Minor and Harding and Committee Members:

And

Honorable Transportation Committee Chairpersons Lamar, Haskell, Vice Chairpersons Cassano and Simms, Ranking members Carney and Somers:

Acadia Center appreciates this opportunity to provide testimony. Acadia Center is a nonprofit research and advocacy organization committed to advancing the clean energy future. Acadia Center advocates for an equitable clean energy future for Connecticut, tackling regulatory and legislative energy policy, transportation, energy efficiency, beneficial electrification, utility innovation, and renewable energy.

Testimony in support of the following bills:

S.B. No. 4 An Act Concerning the Connecticut Clean Air Act

H. B. No. 5039 An Act Concerning Medium-and Heavy- Duty Vehicle Emission Standards

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States in the Northeast have acknowledged the urgency of the climate crisis, established nation-leading emissions reduction targets for 2030, and made great progress in reducing pollution from the electric sector. Unfortunately, transportation emissions in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic region have remained stubbornly high—now accounting for **43% of total CO2 emissions**—and time is running out to establish the policies necessary to achieve the region’s 2030 targets.

Beyond the urgent need for action to address climate change, our outdated and underfunded transportation system hinders economic opportunity and has devastating public health impacts. Worst of all, those economic barriers and public health costs overwhelmingly affect our most marginalized populations: low-income communities, communities of color, and the rural communities lacking mobility options. After a century of transportation decisions that have exacerbated inequalities, leading to **cities segregated by highways** and the emergence of **transit deserts**, it is well past time for investment in a just and sustainable transportation future.

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Currently, California, Oregon, Washington, New Jersey, New York, and Massachusetts have adopted the Advanced Clean Truck rule. Other states are also considering the rule, with some discussions in Maine, Vermont, Rhode Island, Colorado, and Illinois.

Transportation emissions from medium- and heavy-duty trucks and buses pollute our air and account for as much as 53% of the NOx despite being on 6 % of the vehicle fleet by weight.

Communities located near heavy truck traffic corridors are the most impacted by these transportation emissions. Reducing air pollution from medium- and heavy-duty vehicles will greatly benefit the most vulnerable populations in the state. The International Council on Clean Transportation found that electrifying this portion of the fleet in all the MOU signatory jurisdictions could produce fleet wide reductions up to 73% of GHG emissions and 98% of NOx emissions.

The GC3 – the Governor’s Council on Climate Change Phase 1 report released in January 2021 report recommends the following:

“Maintain increasing fuel economy and low- and zero-emission standards. Improving fuel economy can contribute to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction in the transportation sector. Vehicle emissions account for the bulk of Connecticut’s transportation emissions and disproportionately affect low-and moderate-income communities due to the density of traffic in or near these areas. Implementing this recommendation should include the following actions:

- a. Maintain adherence to Corporate Average Fuel Economy and GHG emission standards mid-term review 2016 final determination.
- b. Maintain adherence to California low-emissions and zero-emission vehicle requirements.
- c. Establish emissions standards for medium-and heavy-duty vehicles, including school buses.”

The time has come for good bold regional policy in the transportation sector.

S.B. No. 4 An Act Concerning the Connecticut Clean Air Act

Overall, a step in the right direction in reducing emissions in the state. But there are a few suggestions to include:

As highlighted by the Governor’s [Executive Order 21-3](#) on climate, we need to dramatically reduce VMT by 2030. It’s the most effective way to tackle air pollution from our transportation system while improving safety for vulnerable road users. As a consequence, we strongly encourage members of the joint committee to set into the statutes the language on VMT from EO 21-3 which mandates CT-DOT to come up with a plan to reduce VMTs by 2030. Reducing VMT requires us to engage in shifting our modes of transportation. Also we need not just to replace trucks by electric trucks and cars by EVs, but we must shift our modes of transportation towards public transit and other sustainable modes of transportation.

Acadia Center recommends the creation of an EJ Council within CT DOT to advise on implementation.

CHEAPR board, the body in charge of allocating EV rebates, would become advisory.

Recommend adding 3 members including 1) Bike shop or bike manufacturing/design representative, and (2) active transportation, walk/bike advocacy organization representative that includes an environmental justice community, and 3) someone from PURA (EV charging program)

The bill needs a language update to include “rebate or voucher” for Rebate+ low- to moderate-income (LMI) EV car incentives. Right now, the CT CHEAPR LMI Rebate+ is a post-sale form that must be approved with the rebate coming later as a reimbursement, separate from the baseline rebate. Putting low-income rebates at the point of sale is important for LMI participation. Low-income households can’t wait for \$2,000+ to come later as a reimbursement on a tight month to month budget.

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CHEAPR would award E-Bikes Vouchers: \$500 for LMIs for the purchase of an E-bike with a \$2k price tag.

The program needs to increase the cap for e-bike rebate from \$2,000 from \$3,000 to make sure it includes bike shop quality commuting e-bikes (rear racks, fenders, chain guard, panniers) and entry level car replacement and family transport cargo bikes. At least \$2,500 is needed for commuter e-bikes so the voucher for low -income people needs to be \$1000 in order to be able to encourage E-bike purchases.

Set goals to phase out diesel/gas school buses: 2030 in EJ communities and 2035 in the state. The State of the Air by the American Lung Association: <https://www.lung.org/research/sota/city-rankings/states/connecticut> outlines the case for why the diesel emissions are so devastating. Air pollution in school buses can be higher inside than outside, by EDF: https://www.edf.org/sites/default/files/5342_School_bus_pollution_studies.pdf Last year, Connecticut experienced twenty-one days of unhealthy levels of ozone, and documented some of the highest monitored values on the east coast. A recent national report, [Asthma Capitals 2021](#), ranked New Haven (#5) and Hartford (#17) among the 100 largest U.S. cities where it is most challenging to live with asthma.”

Acadia Center also wants to highlight other important components of this bill. Accelerating electrification of bus transit system, supporting EV charging stations, especially in condos/associations and matching grants for traffic signals

Finally, Section 18 would mandate state agencies and municipalities to engage in carbon mitigation programs whenever a major regional project is implemented (creating bikeways, charging stations).

Acadia Center recommends adding VMT assessments on top of the carbon emissions and induced demand ones for any major regional project. [The Colorado DOT GHG Planning Standard](#) offers a roadmap on mitigation strategies on VMT: “For example, the addition of transit resources in a manner that can displace Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) can reduce emissions. Moreover, improving downtown pedestrian and bike access, particularly in areas that allow individuals to shift multiple daily trips for everything from work to dining to retail, can improve both emissions and quality of life. All told, a reduction in VMT has numerous societal co-benefits including reduced fatal and serious injury crashes, wildlife mortality, and traffic congestion and improvements to public

health, worker productivity, and Colorado's economy." Acadia Center recommends that the communities impacted by "major regional projects" be included in the mitigation strategies.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

For more information:

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